



## 2003 Arizona Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) FAQ Sheet

### How does student health behavior link with the educational environment?

Health problems among students—depression, eating disorders, substance abuse, unplanned pregnancy, etc. – jeopardize academic success and increase the likelihood of dropping out of school. Conversely, school connectedness (students perceiving their school environment as safe and welcoming) correlates with reductions in the same risk behaviors. Schools have a wealth of potential for providing students with the skills to thrive socially, emotionally, as well as intellectually.

### Why administer the YRBS in Arizona schools?

The YRBS was designed and tested by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and has been used for over a decade in most states throughout the country to assess youth risk behaviors. Performance indicators within the Arizona Department of Education's No Child Left Behind (NCLB) consolidated plan are assessed with YRBS results. The YRBS results are used for program assessment for the ADE's CDC-funded programs. Additionally, YRBS results are used by state and local agencies (both health and education) for program planning and assessment, and grant applications.

### Do Students tell the truth on the YRBS?

**Survey Environment** – Survey administration procedures are designed to protect the confidentiality of schools and anonymity of students, e.g., students do not include any identifying information on the survey, proctor and teacher do not walk around the classroom during survey administration, etc.

**Edit Checks within Survey Design** – More than 100 edit checks are conducted on each YRBS data set to remove inconsistent responses, e.g., a student who reports doing a behavior within the past 30-days but never in their life, a student who reports being 2 feet tall and 300 lbs, etc.

**Logic within Groups of Questions** – Questions on similar topics produce logical responses that fit together in a consistent manner, e.g., fewer students will have attempted suicide than those who have thought about attempting suicide, etc.

**Subgroup Differences** – Subgroup differences are logical and remain generally consistent over time, e.g., seniors are more likely to have performed a risk behavior than freshmen.

**Health Data Context** – Students' self-reported risk behaviors are consistent with health research and Arizona health statistics, eg, more females than males experience forced sexual intercourse, adolescents comprise a sizeable amount of arrests for possession of illicit drugs within Arizona, etc.

**Psychometric Studies** – Using the YRBS instrument, researchers have conducted psychometric studies, e.g., focus groups with diverse student populations, two-week follow-up surveys to examine consistency in reporting, etc.

### Were any questions controversial?

Between March and June 2003, 83 schools (3,431 students) participated in the Youth Risk Behavior Survey. The ADE implemented survey administration procedures (protecting the anonymity of students) and parental consent procedures to prevent controversy. The ADE received no complaints from students who participated or their parents.